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instructor in charge and prepare a careful arrangement of his topics. He should put upon the blackboard, or on manifolded sheets, statistics or salient phrases. But when the time for action comes, he should talk, not read. Not only is there an obvious advantage from liveliness of interest; there is the invaluable practice in oral delivery. No student who is incapable of presenting his work in this way should be allowed to persist in preparation for the teaching profession, or even in a career of research.

Finally, the seminary meetings should not last too long. Members should be required to keep within reasonable limits of time. At Harvard University, the men are told to talk not more than forty-five minutes and to present what they wish to say within this limit. Interruptions and questions should be permitted—even encouraged. Yet the instructor in charge must keep his hands on the reins, brush aside irrelevant questions, and prevent discussion from becoming desultory. This requires tact, for if questions are frequently suppressed or the answers to them are postponed, they will not come at all.

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THE ECONOMIC SEMINAR

In the seventies of the last century, when graduate courses began to be developed in our universities, and higher degrees were offered for work in research, the example of the German seminar was naturally the one to be followed. Our scholars had studied in Germany; and the German methods of teaching, including the lecture system, were generally adopted in spite of the fact that conditions prevailing in America were different from those in German institutions. Although the problem method (or the laboratory method) of teaching introductory and advanced courses of economics has now practically won the day against the American recitation system, as well as against the German lecture system, the German type of seminar still obtains in most universities. Remembering that, in most courses in German universities, the professor, supposedly an expert in his special field, followed the strict lecture

method, a seminar, in which discussion and reports by students were made possible, stood out as a signal departure from the lecture method. The seminar on one general subject for all students, in which discussion and reports were a feature, was, however, nothing more than what would be called an advanced course in our American universities. In most, if not all, departments of economics in our large institutions, advanced courses are now carried on by discussion and reports, which in Germany would be deemed seminars. The only true seminar, obviously, is that in which supervision is given to serious research; but, when several students work on the same subject, it is sometimes the purpose of the instructor thereby to obtain student help in writing one of his own books, without much regard to the training of the student.

A further development appeared in the group seminar—now in common vogue in this country—in which students, each carrying on a separate investigation, meet together, perhaps once a week, to listen to the professor's criticism. The step from advanced courses, in which discussion and reports were usual, to the group seminar, in which each student had chosen a separate subject for research, was easy and obvious. That step, however, records no advance over the German method. The group seminar has obvious disadvantages. If each student has a special topic, he is obliged to listen to the report upon a subject foreign to his own, in which other methods, other sources than his own, are used, and in which the criticism has little or no bearing upon his own case. If he has made any substantial progress in his special research, other students will be unable to discuss his position; in fact, he must, in the nature of things, have come to know more about it than anyone else. At the best, the only one from whom he can obtain hints as to treatment, methods, sources, and proportion is his instructor. Hence, he is an indifferent listener in the group while another is getting criticism, and the one not on the grill must feel that his time is ill spent.

Much as we have been indebted to Germany in the past, the development of American universities and American scholarship has brought us to a point where imitation is no longer fruitful and where evolution from our own status is obligatory. Consequently,

after some years of experiment with the group seminar, it was forced upon my judgment that the individual seminar was the only practicable solution of many difficulties encountered in the group seminar; and more than eighteen years of experience with it has confirmed me in this judgment. That is, the true purpose of the seminar can be gained only by an appointment once a week with each individual student carrying on research. Of this it may be said that it is extravagant of time by the instructor. That, of course, is obvious; and it is quite foreign to the usual willingness of the German professor to divert his attention from his own scholarship to the training of many advanced students. In fact, the great amount of time spent in the individual seminar on many students—and which can be met by perhaps two hours each week in a group seminar—will greatly stimulate the productivity of the student, but it will seriously diminish the productivity of the professor. It is a choice between the gain of self and the gain of others. And, no matter how willing, no one professor can care for more than about ten or twelve active investigators.

One must face the facts as to the training and quality of American graduate students. A great number of them have awakened late to the possibilities of the higher education; and of those who have early known a definite purpose in this direction, not all have had good instruction. It is surprising to find so many eager students who have been going through the motions, but have never been educated. The first demand for a serious piece of work on their own initiative, in a new field, discloses the lack of the fundamental qualities of accuracy, capacity to see the central point, control of English, logical reasoning, and a ready command of general economic principles. Most commonly, the greatest lack is in the power of simple, clear, orderly exposition. In the main, this is due to an untrained mind. Therefore, in my experience, an integral part of the work of the teacher must be that of showing the willing, over-eager, hungry, but inexperienced student how to educate himself. Never having had contact with first-rate instruction, he has no conception of his deficiencies. When put to the test, he is usually quick to realize his shortcomings and acquire the humility necessary to the real scholar.

It is only too true that few graduate students are properly trained. They have read more or less, but they do not know anything thoroughly. Both the secondary and the college education are at fault. We waste at least two years in the period before the student enters college. If these two years were fitly used for good training, we should hear little of the proposals to shorten the college course in order to get earlier into the professional schools, or of the pernicious scheme for counting a year of the college course twice—once toward the Bachelor's degree, and again for the professional degree. But even the college course from which our graduate students get their training is still in the melting-pot. The college problem has not yet been worked out. Few graduate students obtain with the Bachelor's degree, for instance, the ability to read French and German; and their grasp and method of work are sadly deficient. Of course, much of the lack is due to immaturity, as well as to poor training; although, on the other hand, many come up for a higher degree at an age when the mind no longer has any capacity to take on flexibility.

Bearing these practical conditions in mind, it is clear that graduate students should get a year or two of a very severe grind in advanced courses before they should be admitted to the seminar. Then, too, one should be willing to give careful consideration to the objective in the seminar. What are the ends to be gained? There may be obvious differences of opinion on this point; but it can be assumed that there would be agreement on the purpose of stimulating the mind to individual self-reliance, to independence of thinking, to impartial weighing of evidence, to looking at a subject from different angles, to exhaust one topic before leaving it as finished, to know the value of first-hand evidence, to obtain a high personal standard of achievement, and to see the relation of a detailed investigation to the broad field to which it belongs. It is one thing to set these aims down on paper; but it is quite another thing to enable a student to translate them into practical usage. To see that a student actually does apply these aims to some one particular piece of research is, in my judgment, the objective of the seminar. These aims should, of course, govern work in all advanced courses; and, if present in all work preliminary to the

seminar, the student will have an immense advantage in his research work. But ordinarily the main part of the task now is to be accomplished in the seminar. In my judgment, it is not possible to do much toward this end in the group seminar, since it is so largely dependent upon getting into close and frequent contact with the mind of each student.

Whatever the subject chosen by the student for his investigation in the seminar, the objective should be the acquisition of methods, rather than the acquisition of knowledge. Of course, no research is worth the name that does not bring forth knowledge, and it may seem that new truth is the only real aim. But methods are more important than any one set of facts, no matter how original; because methods once rightly learned become the permanent tools for organizing other series of new and accurate facts. Once the student has acquired the experience of applying the proper methods in one investigation, he has obtained the most valuable thing he can secure in the seminar. In the group seminar, in which the worker gets only an occasional personal criticism and that of a general nature (supposed to apply also to others), and in the main only on completed sections of his task, he is left to find out methods for himself after much waste of time, and many unnecessary blunders. In the individual seminar, on the contrary, the student, although working independently, is put to a weekly test of his performances, and erroneous methods are immediately corrected.

A satisfactory thesis subject is generally two-sided: involving (1) the accumulation of material, and (2) the organization and formulation of the material. Not so very long ago, in some places, untrained students were set to collecting newspaper clippings and material of like sort, which was—so to speak—chucked into a bag, tied up, and offered to the world as a Doctor's thesis. Something more than patient industry is required in a real investigation. The power of analysis, of establishing relations, in fact, the organization and formulation of the material, is far and away the most serious part of the investigation. It is this which more than anything else tests the maturity and capacity of the seminar student. In this connection we come upon a matter which is essential to any really valuable production. It is what I should

call relative emphasis or a sense of proportion in deciding upon the relative values of various facts or reasonings. By the immature, or untrained person, little discrimination is exercised in separating the large from the small, the valuable from the trash, the relevant from the irrelevant. To him all materials seem about equally important. Moreover, not until he has grasped his subject in its general relations, or seen it as a whole, can he pass any serious judgment upon the relative value of any specific fact. To see that a student carries out this process in one case is the greatest service an instructor can render. It does not seem possible in the group seminar, especially if large.

In the individual seminar, proper methods can be explained in general, then a specific task is undertaken, and a part of it is completed in the best form possible by the student. After the most drastic criticism, both as to content and exposition, it is returned to be rewritten. In no other way does the student so completely reveal to the instructor his mental powers and his mental deficiencies. Then, it is possible to give advice as to how his shortcomings may be overcome, even if years of watchfulness and care are required. Personal suggestion of this sort is rich in result.

The individual seminar is thus a direct path to productivity. Having found himself once by actual performance, the student gains self-reliance, independence, and gives evidence of the power to do equally good things in the future when left entirely to himself. Once taught to walk, he is taught for the future to use his own power of locomotion. To some, it might seem that the individual seminar smacked of "coddling": that the German habit of leaving the student entirely to himself produces a more individual quality and cultivates independence of view. To my mind, after a long experience, the individual seminar rather forces independence, and forces it earlier and without waste of time. It is not coddling to teach a child to walk by himself; he is then more free and more likely to use his own individual force. Once the investigator does a thing rightly by himself, his competence for the next task is vastly improved.

The group seminar has its serious advantages; but perhaps it appears more satisfactory as a finishing-off place for the student

who has had the individual seminar. When the investigator has run the gauntlet of his instructor, and obtained some definite results, then it is good for him and for his fellow-students to lay his performance before the group and stand fire from all possible quarters. Graduate students who have had this kind of training find, when they go to Germany, that the teaching of economics there has not advanced as far as in this country.

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GRADUATE INSTRUCTION IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Graduate instruction in political economy may be understood as a course of preparation designed to equip students who have received a baccalaureate degree, or its equivalent, for a professional career as investigators and teachers. Incidentally, it may serve for cultural or liberalizing purposes in the education of students having some other end in view, but this does not represent its prime design.

As such, graduate instruction is rigidly differentiated from undergraduate teaching. This involves not merely difference in method, but distinctness in personnel. It is inevitable and probably desirable that the same teaching staff be employed, to some extent at least, in graduate and undergraduate instruction; but this identity should not extend to the student body. No undergraduate student should be admitted to graduate courses, nor should those beginning graduate studies be encouraged to enrol themselves in undergraduate classes. Defects in preliminary training should be repaired by private reading under direction, or if more serious—in which event the competence of the candidate might properly be questioned—by attendance upon special classes preparatory to graduate courses.

The constituent elements in the education of a graduate student are (*a*) positive equipment in the recorded subject-matter—past and present—and ready acquaintance with the formulated principles—accepted and controverted—of economic science; (*b*) acquisition of a scientific mode of thought in the matter of economic conditions and of a critical mental habit with respect to economic